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### SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE TO VOTE ON KEY PATIENT PROTECTION BILLS

- *Legislators Hear Bills To Ensure Californians Know and Use Their Patients' Rights*
- *SB908 (Hernandez) Would Provide Notice of Unreasonable Rate Hikes, Allow Patients to Shop Around*
- *SB1135 (Monning) Would Inform Consumers of Their Rights on Access to Care & Where to Complain*

SACRAMENTO, CA – On Wednesday, the Senate Health Committee will be voting on two important health care consumer protection bills to ensure Californians know and take advantage of their patients' rights.

“Californians can only benefit from their rights if they know about them and have the information and ability to act on that information,” said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition. “If a patient has been socked with an unreasonable rate hike, or can’t get in to see a needed doctor for weeks and weeks, Californians need to know they have options.”

[SB 1135 \(Monning\)](#) helps consumers know about their rights, including that there are time limits on how long they have to wait to get health care appointments, their right to an interpreter to translate their medical information into a language of their choice, and who to complain to if they have problems with their health plan.

“The strong consumer protection laws that California has on the books are only as good as consumers’ knowledge of them. Patients should know what their expectations should be and what to do if these rights are violated. This is a common sense bill that will allow consumers to know their rights and complain when needed,” said Wright. “If people have a problem about their insurer, the number to complain to should be easily available and right on the insurance card.”

[SB 908 \(Hernandez\)](#) would provide notice to consumers and purchasers if their health plan is getting a rate hike deemed “unreasonable” by a state regulator—and a new “open enrollment” opportunity to shop around for a new plan as a result.

“Consumers deserve to know if their health insurance plan is charging unreasonable or unjustified rates and they should be given the option to switch plans if they want,” said Wright. “This bill is basic transparency for consumers. We have seen too many instances when insurers go ahead with charging unreasonable rates, while consumers and employers remain uninformed and unable to shop for alternatives. Policyholders shouldn't have to check a regulator's website to find out if they are being charged unreasonable rate.”

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